Beyond the Stars
or
Human Life in Heaven

McCullagh

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BEYOND THE STARS;

OR,

HUMAN LIFE IN HEAVEN.

BY

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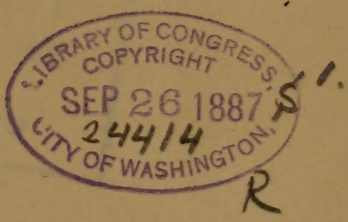

NEW YORK:

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & COMPANY,

38 WEST TWENTY-THIRD STREET.

1887

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TO THE MEMORY OF

MY DEARLY BELOVED WIFE,

WHOSE

LOVE AND COMPANIONSHIP SWEETENED EXISTENCE
AND MADE TOIL PLEASANT,

AND

WHOSE ENTRANCE UPON THE CELESTIAL LIFE HAS
INVESTED HEAVEN WITH FRESH CHARMS,

This Little Book

IS LOVINGLY INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

This little book is the child of affliction. It lays no claims whatever to learned exegesis or literary excellencies. The questions which it discusses are the questions which rose before the mind of the writer when he stood beside the lifeless body of the best friend he ever had in this world, and the one whom he loved most. Its aim is to focalize the various rays of divine truth scattered through the Word of God upon the subject of the condition of the blessed dead immediately after their departure out of this world, for the purpose of affording light and consolation to those whose hearts have been saddened and whose homes have been desolated by death.

The author is neither so presumptuous nor so sanguine as to suppose that what he has written on this important and intensely interesting topic will, in every particular, com-

mand the assent or secure the approval of his readers. He only hopes that he has said nothing contrary to the statements of the Word of God and legitimate inferences from the same.

Should the readers of these pages derive aught of the peace and comfort from their perusal which the writer has experienced in their preparation, he will feel amply rewarded.

BROOKLYN, *June*, 1887.

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BEYOND THE STARS.

I.

HEAVEN THE PRESENT HOME.

It is a moment of great solemnity when we sit by the side of a beloved one and watch, with aching heart, life gradually ebbing—the eye growing dimmer, the pulse feebler, the fatal pallor more visible, until death gains the mastery and the body sinks into that stillness and repose that knows no waking. What becomes of the soul immediately after death? Whither has it gone? Into what new scenes has it been ushered? What is the character of that life which it is now living apart from the body? These questions are not a matter of cold speculation or indifference to those whose hearts have been riven, and the light of whose homes has been extinguished by the hand of death.

Who, in the hour of bereavement, as he hung over the precious form of the departed, kissed the unresponsive lips and smoothed the cold, unconscious brow, has not asked himself whither has the spirit of his beloved gone. How anxiously does the widowed heart, whose deepest yearnings are for

> "The touch of a vanished hand,
> And the sound of a voice that is still,"

crave some light on this point.

The Word of God throws more light on this interesting and important subject than we are wont to suppose, until our thoughts are specially directed to it. No doubt its disclosures are meagre in comparison with what we would like to know; meagre in comparison with what we shall know when we ourselves cross time's boundary line and see the unseen world as it is. Let us take the Word of God as our lamp, to guide us as we attempt to follow the spirit to its new realm of being.

When our Lord, on the eternally memo-

rable night preceding His crucifixion, stood consciously under the cope of death, He said to His disciples, "Let not your heart be troubled. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there may ye be also." A little later, on the same night, He said, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which Thou hast given me." The next day, as He hung upon the Cross, His reply to the prayer of the penitent thief, that He would remember him when he came into His kingdom, was, "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." Paul, in writing from Rome to the Philippians, assured them that he desired "to depart and be with Christ." These passages teach with unmistakable clearness three things. The first is that heaven is a *place*, a place of *abode*, distinct from all other places as truly as is the earth we now inhabit. If it be not a bounded

place of abode, then these passages, and many other declarations of Scripture, have no meaning, and the apocalyptic vision of John on Patmos is an idle phantasm. Heaven is described in the Word of God as a glorious city. To the inspired vision of John this glorious city was surrounded by lofty walls of the most precious stones, which were pierced by gates of pearl; the streets of it were covered with a pellucid pavement of gold. No sun shone in or upon it. It needed no luminary such as supplies light and life to this planet, because it was illuminated by the visible presence and glory of God, and shone itself with a brilliancy and splendor that surpassed all created suns.

It is not claimed that the Bible pictures of heaven are literal, complete, and exhaustive. There are many scenes on this earth of such surpassing grandeur, sublimity, and beauty, that no words can adequately describe them, no photographic art can faithfully portray them, no artist's brush can transfer them to canvas. Of such scenes we say that they

must be seen to be appreciated. If this be true of some things upon the earth, how much more true is it of heaven itself.

What is claimed is that the Bible sets forth heaven as a definite, tangible place of abode. It records two instances of men having been carried up bodily into heaven without dying. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because God had translated him." Elijah, in the sight of his pupil and successor, "went up by a whirlwind into heaven."

When the Bible depicts heaven as a city of surpassing magnificence and loveliness, with many mansions and a central throne, and lighted by the glory of Him who sits upon that throne, it is reasonable to suppose that inspiration has employed the most appropriate symbols to convey to our minds some idea of that place, and that there is some resemblance between the descriptions and the thing described.

The second thing is that heaven is not only a locality, a glorious place of abode, but

it is the place to which Jesus went after His resurrection, and where He now lives and reigns. The body of Jesus, subsequent to His resurrection, was not bound by the material laws to which its actions were generally conformed previous to His death. During the forty days which intervened between His resurrection and His final ascension, He was wont suddenly to manifest Himself to His friends and followers, no one knew from whence, and as suddenly vanish, no one knew whither. He stood in the midst of the disciples "when the doors were shut for fear of the Jews." He suddenly became invisible—vanished from the sight of two of His disciples while they sat talking with Him in a house in the village of Emmaus. Yet, notwithstanding the fact that His body was transformed from an earthly to a heavenly organism, it was still a real body. To the "terrified and affrighted" disciples, who supposed when they saw Him suddenly come out of the unseen "that they beheld a spirit," He said, "Why are ye troubled? and where-

fore do reasonings arise in your heart? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye behold me having." And at last, "while they beheld Him, He was taken up and a cloud received Him out of their sight." It was while, with uplifted hands, He was engaged in the act of blessing them, that His feet ceased to touch the mount, and they saw Him ascend up and up and up until a cloud intervened between Him and them, and He passed beyond the reach of their sight. As they stood in astonishment, gazing at the place where He had disappeared, "behold, two men stood by them in white apparel." These men, addressing them, said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

The third thing is that the souls of believers immediately pass into heaven, where they are with Jesus. "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Para-

dise." As this promise was uttered in the afternoon, it meant that before the sun then westering had sunk below the horizon, this ransomed soul would be with Jesus in heaven. Even when we think of heaven as a definite place of abode, we are accustomed to think of it as an immeasurable distance from the earth. But however widely it may be separated from us in space, it is clearly taught in the Scriptures that the intercourse between heaven and earth is constant and uninterrupted. Milton has said:

> "Millions of spiritual beings walk the earth,
> Both when we wake and when we sleep."

It would only require a slight change in the organ of sight for new and startling wonders to burst upon our vision. Suppose the human eye possessed the combined powers of the telescope, the microscope, and the spectroscope—possessed a range of vision so vast and penetrating that it could discern objects on the surface of distant planets, yet so minute that it could see things now invis-

ible, and so piercing that it could look through objects now opaque and see their constituent elements, would not material creation assume a new aspect of wonder and beauty? A change in our present powers of vision, or the gift of a new sense, might show us that we are encompassed on every side by spiritual beings. When an army of Syrians encompassed the city of Dothan for the purpose of apprehending Elisha, the sight of this army paralyzed his attendant with fear. "Fear not," said the prophet, "for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Then Elisha prayed that the Lord would open the eyes of his attendant. "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

It is no mere speculation or soothing fancy to say that angels surround the couch of the dying saint to conduct his liberated spirit to its celestial home. It is a revealed truth. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, our

Lord says that when Lazarus died he was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. "Abraham's bosom" is a metaphorical expression equivalent to paradise or heaven. With reverent imagination we can see this band of holy ones convey the ransomed soul through interstellar spaces more swiftly than light travels—though it shoots through space at the rate of nearly eleven millions of miles per minute—yea, with almost the velocity of thought, until they reach the pearly gates of the celestial city, whose glory gleams afar. While friends, with hearts that ache with an intolerable sense of want, an unspeakable dreariness and loneliness, and with eyes dimmed with weeping, bend over the body scarcely cold in the embrace of death, the soul, amid the hallelujahs of angelic and redeemed intelligences, enters heaven, and is conducted into the presence of Jesus, to be personally welcomed by Him. Just before the martyr Stephen fell, he "looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand

of God." While his enemies stoned him, he called "upon the Lord, saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,"—and then immediately passed into the very heaven he saw opened, and into the presence of Jesus, whom he saw standing on the right hand of God. O, what a moment of unutterable rapture that must be for the redeemed one, as he passes through heaven's portals, and gazes for the first time upon its ineffable scenes and unreportable glories! What ecstatic joy must thrill his being as he realizes that he is in heaven, saved and eternally safe, and that it is to be *his home forever*. Perhaps he may cry out:

"And is this heaven? and am I here?
How short the road! how swift the flight!
I am all life, all eye, all ear;
Jesus is here, my soul's delight.

"Is this the heavenly Friend who hung
In blood and anguish on the tree?
Whom Paul proclaimed, whom David sung,
Who died for them, who died for me?"

Then the soul, at death, does not, as some would have us believe, sink into a state of

unconsciousness until the resurrection. If such were the case, it would be impossible to conceive of Paul saying that for him to die was gain. Why did he desire to leave this world? That he might sink into a state of unconsciousness? Nay. He desired to depart in order that he might be locally and visibly with Christ.

Nor does the soul at death pass into a place midway between earth and heaven—a place more exalted and grander than earth, yet lower and less glorious than heaven—until the resurrection. It passes immediately into heaven, that place of abode where God permanently manifests the splendors of His uncreated glories, and where Jesus dwells in His glorified human nature. Life in this world is separation from the Lord. "While we are present in the body we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight; we are willing rather to be absent from the body and be at home with the Lord."

II.

THE SPIRITUAL BODY.

Does the human spirit at death pass into the unseen world naked and disembodied? There are men of profound and exact scholarship who, in the name of science and the Scriptures, on the combined authority of God's twofold revelation as given in nature and the written word, affirm that the soul possesses a non-atomic, ethereal enswathement—a spiritual body within this material body, whose complex relation with it is simply dissolved by death. This invisible spiritual body which enswathes the soul, and through which the soul shines as the glory of Christ's Divinity gleamed and flashed through the veil of His humanity on the Mount of Transfiguration, is the immortal vesture with which the soul passes into the eternal world. Joseph Cook, in his work on Biology, devotes

a lecture to the discussion of the fact of a spiritual body in the light of the latest researches of a reverent science. Let me give an illustration from it, which shows the conclusion which he reaches. I use very largely his own words.

Suppose we take a human body, and separate it into its component parts of bones, muscles, arteries, and nerves. Were these four parts separated and held up in their natural condition, they would each have a human form. But behind the nerves there are bioplasts. Bioplasm means that germinal substance which has the power of transmuting non-living into living matter, and of movement and of self-multiplication. It is that power which builds the bones, braids the muscles, constructs the arteries and veins, and weaves the nerves. If we could take out these bioplasts which weave the nerves, and hold them up by the side of the nerves, all in their natural position, they would have a human form. And which of these forms is the man? Your muscles are more important

than your bones; your arteries than your muscles; your nerves than your arteries; and your bioplasts than your nerves. But you do not reach the last analysis here; for if you unravel a man completely, there is something behind the bioplasts. There are many things we cannot see that we know. We know that there is in our bodies a nervous influence that plays up and down our nerves like electricity on the telegraph wire. We have never seen it, but we have felt it. Suppose we could take that out. Suppose we have here a man made up of nerves, and here a man made up of bioplasts, and here a man made up of nervous influence, separated entirely from flesh. The man of nervous force would be more ethereal than either the man of nerves or the man of bioplasts—so ethereal as to be invisible and intangible to men in their present state. But would not this be a man very much more than either of the other two? What if death thus dissolves the innermost from the outermost? We absolutely know that nervous influence is

there. We know also that there is something behind the action of these bioplasts. If we could take this something, which is still finer than what we call nervous influence, and could hold it up here, it would be coincident everywhere with the mysterious human physical outline. Would it not be ethereal enough to go into heaven? When the Bible speaks of a spiritual body, it implies that the soul has a glorified enswathement which will accompany it in the next world. "I believe," adds Mr. Cook, "that it is a distinct biblical doctrine that there is a spiritual as there is a natural body, and that the former has extraordinary powers. It is a body which apparently makes nothing of passing through what we call ordinary matter. The great proposition I wish to emphasize is, that science, in the name of the microscope and scalpel, begins to whisper what revelation ages ago uttered in thunders, that there is a spiritual body with glorious capacities. The self-evident axiom that every change must have an adequate cause, requires us to hold

that there exists behind the nerves a non-atomic ethereal enswathement for the soul, which death dissolves out from all complex contact with mere flesh, and which death, thus unfettering without disembodying, leaves free before God for all the development with which God can inspire it."

Paul says, not that there will be, but that there are, spiritual bodies. "If," he says, "there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body." And who will say that the glorified body in which Moses appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, a body not subject to the laws of time and space, but capable of coming out of the unseen and vanishing into it again, is not the character of the body worn by the redeemed in the interval between their departure out of this world and the resurrection? If our loved ones, for whom to live was Christ, were in the very article of death made perfect in holiness, and in spiritual bodies passed immediately into heaven, has death for them not been immense gain?

It is strictly true that

"It is not death to die,
To leave this weary road,
And 'mid the brotherhood on high,
To be at home with God.

"It is not death to close
The eye long dimmed by tears,
And wake in glorious repose,
To spend eternal years.

"It is not death to fling
Aside this sinful dust,
And rise on strong exulting wing
To live among the just.

"Jesus, Thou Prince of life,
Thy chosen cannot die.
Like Thee, they conquer in the strife,
To reign with Thee on high."

III.

THE LOCALITY OF HEAVEN.

We have seen that heaven is a definite place in some part of the universe. Is it possible to determine its locality? The depths of space beyond the surface of the earth are designated in the Scriptures by the term heavens. These heavens are spoken of as divided into three vast regions. The first heaven is the region of the atmosphere where the clouds are formed, the wind blows, and the birds fly. The second heaven is that immeasurable expanse in which the sun, moon, and the countless stars move and shine. The third heaven, or "heaven of heavens," is the place where God specially and permanently manifests His glory, and where the angels and the saints who have gone from this world dwell. The Bible, in speaking of this heaven of heavens, always speaks of it as

above the earth. When the great forerunner of Christ stood on the banks of the Jordan, he said: "I saw the Spirit *descending* from heaven like a dove." To Nicodemus, Christ himself said: "No man hath *ascended* up to heaven but He that *came down* from heaven." Paul tells us that on one occasion he was "caught up to the third heaven and heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." John, in describing the vision which he received of heaven in Patmos, says: "I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me, which said, *Come up hither.*" As the Bible speaks in popular language, the idea which it designs to convey by representing heaven as above the earth, is that it is a place more glorious and exalted than the earth.

This is all the light it throws upon its locality.

But has anything been discovered in nature, that other volume of Jehovah's

revelation, which throws any light on this interesting point? Since Newton discovered that mystic key that unlocks so many of the secrets of the stellar heavens, astronomers have assiduously sought to find the centre of universal motion. Nor have their labors been altogether in vain. Mädler, of Dorpat, after a series of the most elaborate observations and ingenious calculations extending through years, "reached the conclusion that Alcyone, the principal star in the group of the Pleiades, now occupies the centre of gravity, and is at present the sun about which the universe of stars composing our astral system are revolving." Some conception may be formed of the enormous distance which separates us from this central sun if we reflect that it takes light travelling at the rate of twelve millions of miles a minute five hundred and thirty-seven years to make the journey. It takes our sun eighteen million two hundred thousand years to make *one* revolution around this central luminary! What a lofty significance do these facts im-

part to the question Jehovah put to Job: "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades?" Canst thou arrest that attractive influence which it wields over the sun and its attendant worlds by which it sends them careering with bewildering velocity, yet without the slightest jar or discord, in an orbit of such immensely vast dimensions? If Mädler's conclusion does not rest on the most absolute proof, yet it is claimed for it that "it is as much like the truth as most photographs are like the persons who sit for their pictures in the sun."

Just as Alcyone is the centre around which our sun, with his lordly retinue of planets and satellites, moves with majestic sweep, it is reasonable to conjecture that there is hid away in the infinite depths of space a gravity centre of the whole material universe—a sun of suns, around which all suns and systems revolve in their vast and almost eternal orbits. "It is true we have no certain knowledge of such a centre, but analogy points to it; and if the world were to continue long enough

to accumulate, in future millenniums, accurate series of observations of the motion of the whole heavens, we might even hope to calculate the direction and distance of the physical heaven of heavens; and perhaps instruments might be constructed to catch some rays of its light for mortal eyes. Such anticipations may never be realized, and we must for the present be content to know that science and revelation, standing on the extreme verge of their respective fields, both point to a mysterious centre of the universe of God, whence emanate powers that extend to the utmost limits of space, and where dwells glory inaccessible, which eye hath not seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." *

"At the centre of this august totality of revolving orbs and firmaments, at once the centre of motion and the centre of government to all, is that better country, even the

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* "Nature and the Bible," by Sir J. W. Dawson, p. 71.

heavenly, where reigns in glory everlasting the Supreme Father and Emperor of Nature, the capital of creation; the one spot that has no motion, but basks in majestic and perfect repose while beholding the whole ponderous materialism which it ballasts in course of circulation about it." * It is safe for us to accept this conjecture in regard to the locality of heaven as true, until we ourselves by God's grace reach that glorious place and in the light of its disclosures learn the truth with certainty.

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* "Ecce Cœlum," by E. F. Burr, D.D., page 150.

IV.

THE FELICITY OF THE DEPARTED SAINTS.

The believer in his passage out of this world experiences two great changes. He is freed from a gross material body and has a body exquisitely attuned to the movements and faculties of the soul. He is also absolutely delivered from sin, both as an indwelling principle and as an opposing force.

The negative features of the state upon which he enters beyond death are very fully set forth in the Scriptures. There will be an absence of all those things which shadow, corrode, and destroy happiness in this life.

One of the most familiar spectacles in this world is poverty. There are millions—some of them the blood-bought sons and daughters of God—for whom life means a desperate struggle for the scanty necessities of existence. But in heaven there will be

no poverty. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more"—"For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters."

There will be no *pain* in heaven. No matter in what direction we turn our eyes, we see human beings hampered by bodily infirmities, or dragging out a miserable existence in the midst of physical sufferings. The life of the redeemed on the other side of the grave is unassailed and unassailable by disease and infirmity. No consuming fevers, no wasting consumption, no palsied limbs, no sightless eyes, no mute tongues are found in heaven.

There are moral pains as well as those physical diseases which turn existence into misery and make every nerve a source of anguish. In this world we have to perform painful duties, to submit to painful associations, and to experience painful partings. There is no pain and nothing painful in heaven.

This world, with all its beauty and all its joy, is full of sorrow. There is no moment of time when some hearts are not aching with secret griefs, or breaking with nameless woes, as well as with sorrows which cannot be hid from the public eye. Is it not a heart-rending scene to see a group of little children, just at that age when they specially need a mother's watchful care, gather round her lifeless form to imprint their last kiss upon her motionless lips? Death is a terrible, relentless, inexorable foe, who ruthlessly severs the closest and tenderest ties of nature without explanation and without apology. On what household has not his blighting shadow fallen? What heart has he not touched and saddened? But there is a world where "there shall be no more death; neither sorrow nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Twice it is affirmed in the closing chapter of the Apocalypse that "there shall be no night in heaven." In this world night, which by its darkness and silence favors a constantly-recurring pe-

riod of repose, is as necessary to us as the day. Rest—sleep—

"Sleep, that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great Nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast,"

is indispensable to man. The fact that "there shall be no night" in heaven suggests that the redeemed, on entering it, are clothed with an amazing increase of power, since they need no season of repose. But "night" is used in the Scriptures in a metaphorical sense for ignorance and error. Therefore, we may interpret the absence of night as meaning that there shall be no intellectual and spiritual darkness in heaven.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

"Here our views are limited; and we see only the skirts of His glory; there the revelation will be as ample as our finite faculties will permit. What saints already know will

shine with new light, and present itself to their minds with an evidence and satisfaction which they never formerly experienced; mysteries will be explained, difficulties will be solved, and excellencies will rise to view in the Divine nature, of which no vestige was discoverable in His works. How glorious will He appear when every veil is removed, and He is contemplated in the fullness of His attributes! The sight will be transporting, and will excite the highest admiration and joy."*

In view of that new and infinitely more glorious mode of existence that awaits the believer the moment he passes out of this world, is it not true that death is immeasurable gain? "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Dead!

"There is no death—what seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of life elysian,
Whose portal we call death."

The departed saints are living a far higher,

*Dr. John Dick.

grander, and nobler life than we are. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne." They have overcome, and have entered upon a career of sinless, griefless, painless, deathless activity, in which they are perfectly happy up to the measure of their capacities.

"We speak of the realms of the blest,
Of that country so bright and so fair,
And oft are its glories confessed—
But what must it be *to be there?*

"We speak of its pathways of gold,
Of its walks decked with jewels so rare,
Of its wonders and pleasures untold—
But what must it be *to be there?*"

V.

HEAVENLY RECOGNITION.

Are the tender relationships and holy fellowships of this world, which have been severed by death, ever to be reunited? Shall we know and love in heaven those whom we have known and loved on earth? As there are few who have not reluctantly surrendered loved ones into the hands of death, the renewal of whose companionship they crave, this topic is one of thrilling interest to us all. Before adducing the direct testimony of God's Word on this important topic, glance for a moment at two strong presumptive arguments. The first is, that a belief in future recognition is a matter of almost universal expectation. On this point, nearly all mankind—Greeks and Romans, Jews and Gentiles, Christians and heathens—are agreed. God never mocks His creatures. The fact

that He has implanted an instinct, appetite, or desire in our nature shows that He has made provision for its legitimate gratification —as certainly as that He made the eye for light and the lungs for air. But, if we are not to know our earthly friends after we part with them here, then God, contrary to His known character, has implanted deeply in our natures a universal expectation which is doomed to disappointment. The consequences which flow from a denial of this doctrine are appalling. If there is no mutual recognition of friends in heaven, then the death of our loved ones is, for us, equivalent to their annihilation; for if they continue to live, and we do not know them, it is the same to us as if they did not exist at all. Is not this a thought from which we shrink with horror?

The second argument is the immortality of memory. There are few facts more clearly established in mental science than that whatever is once stamped upon the memory is never forgotten. Ten thousand things which

have been said and done and known, may pass from recollection without being obliterated from the memory. The tablet of the human memory is God's book of remembrance, on which is written the record of each man's life. Many trustworthy instances might be cited of memory, when men were suddenly brought face to face with death, marshalling all the events of a lifetime before the mind in the twinkling of an eye. It only requires some extraordinary incident to occur in the experience of any man to cause his memory to recall all the forgotten secrets of his life, and hold them up before his mind. It is clearly taught in the Bible that memory, which is the foundation of all the intellectual faculties, accompanies us into the eternal world. Indeed, its perpetuity is essential to our identity. Christ did not come into this world to change the mental and moral faculties of man, but to purify them, exalt them, and fix them on God. The redemption song which the saved in glory sing involves the continuance of memory; it implies that they remember

their experience here, and the sins from which they have been washed. If they remember their experiences here, will they not also remember those with whom their lives were most intimately intertwined?

Look at some of the testimonies of Scripture on this point. Take the case of David. When his child was smitten with a severe illness, David prostrated himself upon the ground, and fasted and prayed, in the hope that God would arrest the disease and spare the child's life. But when he learned that the child was dead, to the astonishment of his servants he rose from the ground, washed himself, went to the house of the Lord and worshipped, and then partook of some refreshments. The explanation which he gave of his conduct was this: "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me that the child may live? But now that he is dead . . . . I shall go to him; but he shall not return to me." This incident shows two things—that David confidently ex-

pected to see his child after death, and as confidently expected to recognize him.

Take the Transfiguration scene on the Mount. The disciples knew that the two celestial visitors who appeared in company with Christ on that occasion, were Moses and Elijah. How they learned this fact, whether Jesus told them, or they gathered it from the conversation which they overheard, or knew from something in the appearance of these illustrious personages who they were—we are not informed. But if the disciples knew these two men, is it not reasonable to suppose that Moses and Elijah knew each other? And if Moses and Elijah, whose ministries on earth were separated by centuries, knew each other, is it not fair to suppose that other saints in heaven know each other?

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus teaches us that Dives knew Abraham and recognized Lazarus. He remembered his own life in this world, and the history and conduct of his brethren with whom he had

been intimately associated on the earth stood out distinctly before his mind.

Man will be essentially the same throughout the ceaseless millenniums of eternity. And as man he needs, with reverence be it said, more than the society of God and the angels to render the blessedness of heaven complete. He needs the society and companionship of his fellow-beings, those who are on a level with him and have had an equality of experience. He who did not deem it "good for man to be alone" in the sinless paradise of earth, even when he enjoyed the society of God himself and had angels for his associates, knows that it would not be good for man to be alone even in the midst of celestial bliss, "and therefore He has provided for the association of the spirits of just men made perfect with each other.

"He who dowered this earth with such strong personal attachments, the sweetest and best things in it, will not deprive heaven of them. He who united two fond hearts by the closest and most endearing ties of earth,

will not beyond the grave, as the poet says, sever that united life in two, and bid each half live again and count itself the whole. Are they not as husband and wife heirs together of eternal life? The marriage union were but a poor image of the bond that unites Christ to His Church if it were loosed beyond the grave. It is true that there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage in heaven, for under new conditions there must be new relations; but it is only that which is temporary in marriage that is dissolved by death, while that love in it which is immortal is purified and perfected. If in this life only we love, to extend the words of the apostle, we are indeed most miserable, considering the preciousness of love and the frail tenure on which it hangs—the warm nest on the rotten bough. If on heaven's oblivious shore we have everlasting joy, but never more the friends that were dear to us here; if to die is the disintegration of love, and reconstruction of it beyond the grave as an impersonal universal element

which all shall breathe equally; if the mansions of the blessed are denuded of special and particular affections, and every one there shall be equally dear, and all shall be loved alike—there is nothing attractive in the picture or prospect. We shrink from it with instinctive dislike. It is not what our warm hearts crave, for we know well that if we cease to love them with a positive, definite, individual love, we lose our memory and our identity; we cease to be ourselves. Our hearts protest against such a doctrine as that, and, blessed be God, it exists only in the vain imaginations of ignorant men; it has no place in the Bible. In God's Word we are told that we shall have the most endearing society in heaven; that that society will include those to whom we were most tenderly related by nature or pious fellowship, purged of all its selfishness and perpetuated in the purest and most blissful form forever. It is in order that human beings in heaven, while they love all the saints with pure hearts fervently, may love individuals with a special

individual love, and may be bound to them by special ties of gratitude and affection, that He makes them here the instruments of each other's salvation. Why are children committed to the fostering care of parents with the injunction from the heavenly Father to train them up for Him? Why are the ties of family and friendship so many consecrated channels through which the life-blood of religion may flow from heart to heart? Is it not that the family of God in heaven may be linked together by the special ties that bind them here?" *

Did not the Lord Jesus while loving all His people, manifest a peculiar regard for some? Peter, James, and John were honored by being admitted to a degree of closer intimacy than the other members of the apostolic band. They were witnesses of His transfiguration and of His agony in Gethsemane. He loved John more than any of His disciples. And of those outside of the

* "Three Great Miracles," by Rev. Hugh Macmillan, LL.D.

apostolic band He loved with a special, personal love, Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Is not Jesus "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever"? Is He not the perfect model of His saints, whether on earth or in heaven? Then heaven is not denuded of special and particular affection. Our loved ones who have passed into heaven, for whom our love has increased rather than diminished since their departure, have no more forgotten us or ceased to love us than we have forgotten them or ceased to love them. Though sinless, transfigured, and glorious, they are still human and essentially the same as when they left us. They have met, recognized, and now associate with those whom they knew and loved here, who were in heaven before them, and they wait to welcome those whom they love who are to follow them. Could they speak to us we might hear them say:

"O friends of mortal years,
The trusted and the true,
Ye are watching still in the valley of tears,
But I wait to welcome you.

"Do I forget? O no!
For memory's golden chain
Shall bind my heart to the hearts below,
Till they meet to touch again."

VI.

THE EMPLOYMENT AND HOME LIFE OF THE GLORIFIED.

WHAT is the employment of the redeemed in the heavenly world? The answer to this interesting question must be based on the nature of the soul, and the Scriptural descriptions of heaven, rather than on any specific statements of the Bible. It will help us to true, realistic ideas of heaven if we keep clearly before our minds the design of Christ's redemptive work. Man was originally made in the image of God. The record is: "God created man in His own image; in the image of God created He him." This means that God endowed man with those rational and moral attributes which belong to Himself as a Spirit. If man had not sinned he would not have died, but at the end of the period of his probation his body would have undergone

such a change as would have rendered it immortal. "We shall not all sleep; but we shall all be changed." The design of salvation is not to recreate man, in the sense of making him a new and different kind of a being from what he is. Regeneration does not alter the constitution of the soul, but changes its governing disposition, and fashions it anew after the image of God in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. The object of salvation is to restore man to the position which he once occupied as the child and companion of God. "Human nature will never cease to be human nature, or be changed into a different species of existence, no more than Jesus Christ, the head of His Church, will ever cease to be what He is—the man Christ Jesus, with a human body and a human soul, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."

When the soul quits the body, it carries with it into heaven all those innate and acquired mental idiosyncrasies and moral qualities which distinguished it on earth from all

others. If we regard our friends who have entered heaven as unchanged in the essential elements of their being, retaining their individuality and all those characteristics which endeared them to us while on the earth, only freed from the limitations of this body, then there are certain employments in which it is both rational and Scriptural to suppose them to be engaged. One of these employments is praise. Praise is set forth in the Bible as constituting a conspicuous feature of the heavenly life. John was caught up into heaven, and was inspired by the Holy Spirit to describe, as pictorially and accurately as it is possible to portray celestial scenes in earthly language, what he saw and heard. He saw "four living creatures"—pictorial symbols of the creative work and providential government of God—surround the throne of the Eternal, ceaselessly singing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." They are ceaseless, because there is no cessation in the honor which God receives from His works and the various acts of

His providence. The four-and-twenty elders who represent saved sinners, and who were arrayed in white robes, and crowned with golden crowns, and seated on thrones, fell down before Him who sat on the central throne, and cast their golden crowns at His feet, saying: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." Beside the eternal throne upon which Deity, in the person of the Father, sat, stood the Lord Jesus Christ, and in His presence the four-and-twenty elders fell down, and sung a new song, saying: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God, by Thy blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." And the angels, to the number of "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands," joined in this song, saying: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and

strength and honor and glory and blessing." John described what he saw—angels who had never sinned, and human beings who had sinned and who had passed from earth to heaven, uniting in adoring ascriptions of praise and gratitude to God. He has reported to us the words of these heavenly songs. The thoughts and sentiments which they contain are the thoughts and sentiments of every one in this world who worships God in spirit and in truth. As the life of the saint in heaven is a continuance of the life he began here, his worship and praise differs not in kind, only in degree, from what it did here. As the glorified saints are sinless, and with them faith has given way to sight, and hope has been merged into fruition, their praise is more rapturous and ecstatic. But it is not to be supposed that they spend all their time in singing. There is nothing irrational or unscriptural in supposing that there are stated periods in heaven, as there are on earth—great days of the Lord—when saints and angels gather from all parts of heaven before

the Lord, and give expression to their exultant joy in rapturous and thrilling songs which fill heaven with the echo.

Another employment of heaven is the acquisition of knowledge. To say that the human mind is cultivatable and expansible is to state the merest truism. Look at the obstacles it has overcome, the discoveries it has made, and the wonderful things which it has achieved through the ages that are past. Still, there is no indication that it has called into active operation all its latent forces, or touched the limit of its power in any particular direction. After all, how little do men know of the secrets of the universe in which they live—of the nature of the forces which lie behind phenomena! No doubt the future will chronicle greater discoveries, sublimer and more brilliant intellectual achievements than the past records. Earthly existence is the period of the mind's childhood. There is a great difference between the mind of a child and the mind of a sage; between Goethe and a German peasant, Newton and an English

ploughman, Emerson and a Georgian negro. But there is a greater difference between the wisest philosopher on earth and one who has passed out of the conditions of time and sense into the spirit world. New wonders and glories in creation, exhibiting the manifold wisdom and power of God, on a scale far surpassing the loftiest attainments of the wisest of men, burst upon the minds of the glorified, and open up to their contemplation endless avenues of knowledge. The mysteries of Providence which baffle and perplex us, they understand. The things of revelation which are too deep for us to fathom, and too lofty for us to scale, they clearly apprehend. New wonders—deep mysteries pertaining to God, His works, acts, and purposes—are constantly unfolding themselves to their minds, and widening the range of their knowledge. Paul, in contrasting the limitation and imperfection of our knowledge in this world with what it will be in the world to come, says: "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part,

but then shall I know even as I am known."

We hesitate not to believe that the same diversity which marks society in this lower world will characterize the society of heaven, and that it has spheres of employment suited to the powers and capacities of those who enter it. God has made no two things exactly alike. This is true everywhere. Take the tube of the astronomer and sweep the glittering vault of night, and in its depths you will find no two stars that are exactly alike. Here is Mars, glowing with his crimson hue; there is Jupiter, with his attendant moons, and yonder is Saturn, girdled with his mysterious rings. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differeth from star in glory." As in the starry realm, so in the vegetable world there are generic likenesses with specific differences. No two blades of grass, no two roses, no two trees, no two plants in earth's flora are exactly alike. The same diversity exists in the kingdom of

men. No two human bodies, no two human faces, no two human voices, are in every particular the same. A like dissimilarity is exhibited in characters which have been moulded by divine grace. God never casts two human beings in exactly the same form. There is Abraham the patriarch, Moses the lawgiver, Samuel the judge, David the king, Elijah the reformer, Daniel the statesman, Ezra the theologian, Nehemiah the patriot, Paul the missionary, and John the seer. How unlike, in many particulars, these great men are. Yet each was a chosen workman of God. The same dissimilarity exists among the inhabitants of heaven. While all of them are perfectly happy up to the measure of their capacity, there is a difference in the degrees of their capacity for enjoying. So there are degrees of brilliancy, degrees of power, degrees of honor in heaven, as the reward of faithful and heroic service here. If the Christian life here is a training-school for the life hereafter, then the gifts cultivated and the sinless habits acquired in this world, will have an influence

in fitting men for the different spheres of activity in the heavenly world. It may be that one part of the employment of glorified saints is the same as the angels'—to act as messengers of God to distant worlds in various parts of the universe.

Man is a social being, and in heaven there is provision made for this part of his nature. Heaven is a vast and populous world, and contains "many mansions." Each one may possess a mansion—"a building of God, a house not made with hands"—that will correspond to the nature of that land and the body there worn as truly as our present houses correspond to this world and these material bodies. "From scenes of surpassing glory, and from the public services of unutterable joy that crowd heaven, the redeemed need places of retirement where they may gather and compose their thoughts in meditation, and receive the full benefit of their public outgoings." *

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* "Paradise," by Rev. Robert M. Patterson, D.D., page 201.

In these mansions the redeemed meet for purposes of social intercourse and mutual edification. They tell each other of their experience in that glorious land, and converse about the things in which they are mutually interested.

"What if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven? and things therein
Each to other like, more than on earth is thought."

"As knowledge here is acquired by the aid of instructors, why," asks Dr. Archibald Alexander, "may not the same be the fact in heaven? What a delightful employment to the saints who have been drinking in the knowledge of God and His works for thousands of years, to communicate instruction to the saints just arrived! How delightful to conduct the pilgrim, who has just finished his race, through the endless, blooming bowers of Paradise, and to introduce him to this and the other ancient believer, and to assist him to find out and recognize among so great a multitude old friends and earthly relatives."

The attributes and laws of the human soul, and the intimations and implications of the Scriptures, justify us in believing that our loved ones who have passed into heaven are not so changed as to be unrecognizable, nor have they entered upon a mode of existence utterly inconceivable. They retain their individuality and the sinless characteristics which endeared them to us here. Freed from the limitations of time and sense, they are more glorious than they were. They are consciously and blissfully in the presence of God, in the society of Jesus, in the companionship of angels and sinless fellow-beings, engaged in such services as the powers with which they were originally dowered and the discipline of this world fitted them. We speak of them as dead. But—

"Death is another life. We bow our heads
At going out, we think, and enter straight
Another golden chamber of the King's,
Larger than this, and lovelier."

VII.

THE RELATION OF DEPARTED SAINTS TO THIS WORLD.

What relation do glorified human spirits sustain to this world? Do they still retain an interest in it? Do they know anything that occurs here?

It has already been shown that the spirits of the just made perfect are in the same place with the angels, and have them for companions. The Bible reveals the fact that angels visit this earth, study with keenest interest the unfolding purposes of divine love and mercy for man, and thereby obtain new and enlarged views of the interior nature of God and of His infinite attributes. "The principalities and powers in heavenly places" —the various orders of good angels—attain their highest conceptions of "the manifold wisdom of God," new displays of His in-

finite wisdom, power, and grace, through the church. These angels bend with benevolent sympathy over our race, encamp as invisible guards around good men, and in circumstances of extremity and peril render them necessary helpful aid. You could not eliminate from the New Testament its angelic incidents without destroying its beautiful consistency and sadly mutilating its gleaming pages. Take a few instances of angelic agency. It was an angel who pre-heralded the birth both of the son of Elizabeth and the Son of Mary, and announced the dawn of the new dispensation. On the night of Jesus' advent angels hovered near the spot of His nativity, and in the ears of the startled shepherds sang—sang more marvellously than when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy"—that celestial anthem that still goes on echoing down through the ages,

"Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, good-will toward men."

Angels seemed to have watched His conflict of forty days with Satan, for after Satan's defeat and withdrawment, they ministered to Him. An angel came to Him as He lay at midnight in agony of spirit upon the cold ground, His brow covered with beads of crimsoned sweat, and strengthened Him. Angels stood by the empty tomb and proclaimed His resurrection, and were present on the occasion of His ascension, and foretold the manner of His return. An angel appeared to the devout Cornelius while he was engaged in prayer, and instructed him how and where to obtain the knowledge he needed. An angel visited Peter in prison, knocked the shackles from his limbs, threw open its bolted doors, led him safely through the sleeping guards, and set him free. But why particularize? Is it not declared that they are all ministering spirits engaged in rendering helpful service to the heirs of salvation? If the angels are constant visitors to this earth, and are engaged, both when we wake and when we sleep, in carrying out

God's commands relative to His people; if they are present at the bedside of dying saints to conduct their spirits to heaven; if they know when each sinner is converted and participate in the rejoicing which takes place in heaven over the salvation of an immortal soul—all of which is taught in the Scriptures with a clearness and an explicitness which no one questions—and if the glorified saints are the associates of the angels, is it not reasonable to suppose that even through the angels they know something of what is going on in this world? If there is joy in heaven when it is reported that sinners on earth have turned from Satan unto God, who could more appreciatively participate in that joy, and swell its volume, than those who had once been sinners?

Has the fact that Christ has taken up His residence in heaven, and is, from His invisible throne, conducting the affairs of His kingdom, weakened His love for His people on earth or diminished His interest in the triumph of truth and righteousness? Does

not the crowning glory and happiness of the believer consist in being with the Lord Jesus and being like Him, delighting in what He delights, and rejoicing in what He rejoices? As He is deeply interested in the salvation of individual men and women, is it foolish, is it rash, to suppose that the saints in heaven, many of whom sacrificed, suffered, and even died for the cause of truth and the vindication of righteousness, are deeply interested in those events occurring on the earth which affect the prosperity of the Church and the eternal welfare of men? To the questions—Do the glorified still retain an interest in this world? and do they know anything of what is taking place here?—we hesitate not to answer, yes, yes. It is as easy to conceive of man in the maturity of his powers, forgetting the scenes of his boyhood home, as it is to conceive of those who have passed from earth to heaven, forgetting their lives here.

But do glorified human spirits ever revisit the scenes of their former activity? Do they

ever come back to this earth? We listen with breathless interest to the answer God's Word gives to this question. It tells us that Moses and Elijah appeared in company with Jesus in the presence of three of His disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration and talked with Him. The subject of their conversation has been reported. They talk with Him about the sufferings and death which He was soon to endure in Jerusalem, and the magnificent results which would be achieved thereby. This incident teaches two truths. It shows us the possibility of glorified spirits revisiting this earth. What was possible in the case of Moses and Elijah, is possible for other glorified spirits. It shows us that the glorified saints do take an interest in some things which occur in this world. Moses and Elijah, the representatives of the saints then in heaven, were deeply interested in the work of Christ.

But the Scriptures go farther than this. They assure us that we are surrounded by a great multitude of glorified spirits, who hang

over us like a cloud of spectators to witness our progress in the Christian race. The inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "we are encompassed by so great a cloud of witnesses." "That the souls of believers," says Dr. Junkin, "being separated from the body, should be employed as angels are, ministering to the living saints, is in itself so reasonable that I should entertain the sentiment if the Bible were silent on the subject. The general prevalence of ghost stories, the popular belief on this subject so extensively prevalent, must have some foundation in truth. Superstition itself is but a perversion of truth. If utterly inconsistent, superstitions could not control men as they often do. It is their consistency with reason that gives them power. I can see nothing unreasonable in the conception that the souls of dead believers are employed like the angels of glory as messengers of mercy to living saints. It may be objected that we have no knowledge of it. We have no knowledge of angelic ministrations, and yet

the Bible affirms them as realities. We have no knowledge of our soul's activity when we are asleep; but do you believe that the soul is therefore inactive?" What are some of our dreams? "They may be but the dying whispers of interviews with other spirits confusedly echoing through the inlets of clay." "How pleasant the thought that our beloved friends who enjoy in glory the complete atonement, are permitted to visit us while we still linger in the vale below. In how many ways do they snatch us from temptation, do they whisper to our spirits, This is the way we travelled — it leads to the heavenly home. How sweet the thought that our dear departed ones stand by the dying couch and witness our last struggle and strengthen us against temptation; and the moment of our release, oh, with what glad emotions do our freed spirits, now in open recognition of their presence, embrace them and with them wing their way to the heavenly glory! Who, oh, who among the countless throng,—oh, who among the ten

thousand times ten thousand that stand before the blessed Jesus—who so likely to desire and expect the embassage to our dying couch—who so likely to obtain it as those who with us have fought the good fight of faith and finished their course with joy; and who have but recently travelled the road to glory and to God." *

Ah, were not these eyes withholden—could we see the invisible and the spiritual as we shall see them when we lay aside these tabernacles of clay—how often might we find that those whom death has taken from our side, and whom we are accustomed to think of as far off in some distant part of God's universe, are near us. "Perhaps," said Dr. Guthrie, as he lay dying—in alluding to the death of his youngest child, who had died many years before, "the greatest trial in all my life was when I lifted the clay-cold body and laid it in his little coffin. Ay, though his little feet never run on this earth, I think I see him

* "Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews."

running to meet me at the golden gate." More than Dr. Guthrie indulge the fond anticipation of happy meetings and eternal reunions.

"Over the river they beckon to me,
Loved ones who've crossed to the farther side,
The gleam of their snowy robes I see,
But their voices are drowned in the rushing tide."

VIII.

THE RESURRECTION BODY.

While the Scriptures teach that believers, at death, do immediately pass into heaven and enter upon a career of unspeakable glory, they also teach that they have not yet attained to their highest state of bliss. Their state of perfect bliss will be attained when God shall give them back their bodies, which He is to raise, transfigured and deathless, out of the ashes of the sepulchre. When will this intermediate state—this period of disseverance of the soul from the body—end? It will end at the second coming of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is to return again to this world in person, to right its wrongs and settle up its affairs on the principles of infinite equity. The manner of His return will, in splendor, comport with the dignity of His person. He Him-

self has said: "The Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him." The angels who appeared to the disciples at the moment of His ascension, as they stood gazing up into heaven at the spot where He had disappeared, said: "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them, also, that are asleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." John also writes: "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him." These passages teach us that the Lord shall return in celestial, regal glory, and that His visible appearance in the

clouds, accompanied by the angelic and redeemed hosts of heaven, will be announced by a signal cry; by the sound of a trumpet that will be heard by all the inhabitants of the earth. At what particular time in the revolving centuries the Lord will return in person we know not. We only know that a fixed time in the secret counsels of God has been appointed, when the present order of things shall be brought to a close. He may not come in our lifetime. Millenniums may roll by before God's appointed day arrives. The first act in the closing drama of this world will be the resurrection of the bodies of the saints. "The dead in Christ shall rise first."

In discussing the question of the resurrection of the body with some Corinthian Christians who denied it, Paul sets it forth as an essential factor of Christianity. To deny it, he declares, is to brand Christ as a deceiver, stamp the Gospel as a tissue of falsehoods, affirm that the early disciples, who sealed their testimony with their blood, were conscious

and deliberate liars, and that the good who had departed this life are annihilated. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, if so be that the dead rise not." He supposes an objector to raise two questions, viz.: "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" Mark how Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, answers these two questions. First, "How are the dead raised up?" He answers this question by analogies drawn from nature. He does not adduce these analogies as proofs of the resurrection. The resurrection of the body is a pure doctrine of revelation, incapable of being demonstrated by reason from the facts which nature supplies. These analogies are adduced for the purpose of making plain to the minds of those who regard the resurrection of the body as inconceivable its possibility and credibility, by showing that events

analogous to it were constantly occurring around them. His first illustration is drawn from the laws of vegetable reproduction, and is designed to show that death is often a condition of a new and higher form of life. "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." Thou foolish one who considerest the resurrection of the body to be inconceivable and impossible, what becomes of the seed planted in the ground? Does it not ferment, disintegrate, rot and die, in order that it may live again? Death for the seed does not mean annihilation, only dissolution—the passing out of one mode of existence into another. May the same not be true of the human body? If decay and decomposition on the part of the seed are a necessary condition of a new and higher form of life, may they not also be the necessary prelude and the prognostic of a grander and more glorious mode of existence for the human body? "That which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be." When you sow seed, that which springs up differs

in outward form from that which you planted. The seed dies, and out of it springs a blade; then the blade changes into a stock with a flower on it. How different in outward form is the beautiful green stock, waving in the wind, from the sere little seed which you sowed. Yet, notwithstanding the great outward changes which each seed undergoes, it preserves its identity. If you plant wheat you reap wheat, and if you plant corn you reap corn. Each seed preserves that particular form or body which God was pleased, in His infinite wisdom, to give it at creation. The point of the illustration is this—that the future body may differ from our present body as much as the waving grain in the summer sun differs from the bare, dry seed sowed in the ground. Yet, as the seed sowed preserves its identity amid all the changes of form which it undergoes, so the immortal and glorified human body will be essentially the same as the present body. The two things which this analogy drawn from the laws of vegetable reproduction teaches are: First, that

death does not necessarily imply destruction; it is sometimes the necessary condition for a higher and more glorious manifestation of life; and second, that outward form may change, and yet identity be still preserved. If physiological science be true, the human body, by the assimilation of new matter and the excretion of old matter, undergoes a complete change in seven years. Notwithstanding the fact that the man of seventy has had ten bodies, and that his body has been changed repeatedly in size and expression, is he not conscious of being the same person that he was in boyhood? Is it not then conceivable that the human body will preserve what is essential to its identity, amid all the changes which await it in the grave, until it emerge from it a glorious and immortal body?

The second analogical argument used by Paul is that the same substance may assume many forms. This is seen in the fact that there is a great difference between earthly bodies. "All flesh is not the same flesh; but

there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." Originally all flesh was formed out of the same fundamental elements. The bodies of fishes, birds, beasts, and men are composed of flesh and blood. But how different in kind and form is the flesh of these various orders in the animal kingdom. The inference is that if God out of the same fundamental elements could fashion the various orders of animals which inhabit the globe, each adapted to its environments, is it supposable that His power is exhausted and that no new exhibition of it will be witnessed when the buried bodies of His saints are raised?

The answer of Paul to him who objected to the possibility and credibility of the resurrection on the ground that when the human body dies it returns to its original elements, and these elements may in turn enter into the fibres of plants, and through them into the tissues of animals, and subsequently become incorporated in other human bodies;

and consequently it is incredible that God should raise up these bodies again, since the atoms which compose them might have been in a thousand other human bodies, is, as we have seen, twofold: First, the resurrection of the body is possible and conceivable from the fact that analogous events are constantly occurring in the vegetable world under our own eyes; second, from the fact that matter is capable of endless modifications. If God can fashion the same matter into the granite of the hills and the waters of the sea, the clods of the valley and the hues of the rainbow, into waving verdure and golden fruit, the monster of the sea and the navigator of the air, the beast of field and forest, and the expressive features of the human face, is it not absurd to say that our future bodies must be gross material bodies like our present bodies? The resurrection body may still be a body essentially the same as this body, and yet differ from it in appearance, as much as the waving grain differs from the decaying kernel in the moist soil, or sun-

lit cloud differs from the lustreless clay. Is God all-powerful? Did He of old call out of the matrix of nonentity the matter of which this globe was formed? Was man's body originally formed from the dust by His creative fiat? Why then should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead? For Him as a Being to whose power no limit can be set, all things are possible.

The second question is, "With what manner of body do they come?" The apostle replies that the resurrection body will differ in inward qualities as well as in outward aspect from our present bodies. "It is sown in corruption." That is, the human body is laid in the grave, as the seed is planted in the ground, liable to corruption and decay. It is laid there, not to be lost, but to await the resurrection day, when it will be "raised in incorruption"—no longer liable to decay. "It is sown in dishonor." When the human body is laid in the grave, decomposition having secretly commenced its destructive work,

it is stripped of the beauty and attractiveness it possessed while living. It is necessary to conceal it from view. But it will be "raised in glory." It will come forth in a form of resplendent brightness and nameless beauty that will awaken wonder and admiration. "It is sown in weakness." The human body in the prime of its power is weak. Care has to be taken not to unduly tax its strength or strain its energies, lest it break down and become a wreck. Even with the most judicious care, its power soon wanes. At death it is absolutely stripped of all power. But it will be "raised in power." It will be raised in the possession of an energy, elasticity, and power that will render it a fit abode for the enlarged capacities and new functions of the glorified spirit. "It is sown a natural body." A natural body is an organism composed of flesh and blood, requiring food, air, and rest. But it will be "raised a spiritual body," needing none of these things.

Our present bodies possess five senses, through which we obtain whatever knowl-

edge we possess of the universe. The glory of the resurrection body may be somewhat dimly conceived by reflecting how wonderfully our knowledge and power would be enlarged by these senses simply being increased in range and acuteness. Take the organ of hearing. Why is there such marvellous silence in a tropical forest at noonday? The stillness is in part due to the dullness of our hearing. It is possible to conceive of this organ being rendered so acute and sensitive that the little currents flowing through the cells of the trees would break upon the ear like the roar of Niagara. "We communicate with one another here upon the earth by means of speech, and as it is only needful and desirable that we should do so at very limited distances, it is but a small circle of the space around it that the human voice can fill so as to be distinctly audible to its outer edge. Beyond that, the sound dies away and is lost. This arises not from the feebleness of an organ alone, but chiefly from the air being comparatively so dull and sluggish a medium for conveying

sound. We know at least of other mediums which are far more careful of any movements committed to them; which do not suffer them to be soon dissipated and lost; which transmit them with far greater velocity. The medium or element, for instance, through which light passes is of this nature. Light travels through that medium six hundred and eighty times quicker than sound does. It takes but a few minutes to come to us from the sun. Now let us only conceive that, instead of having a vehicle which can carry its passengers so short a way, and at comparatively so slow a pace, sound had a vehicle as ethereal and elastic as light has—let us conceive that, instead of there being a difference between them, there were a sameness; that the Almighty so ordered it, as He so easily could, that the sound of a human voice could travel side by side with a sunbeam, uttered this moment upon the earth, it could be heard a few moments afterward among the stars. Let the Creator of all things make but this single and simple change, then at once within easy

reach of each other would the inhabitants of the most distant worlds be placed, and, had they but a common language, could just as easily converse across the vast fields of space as we can here converse across the breadth of a few hundred yards; the question and answer might pass to and fro; and one hour's such converse, to how many questions which have occupied the most thoughtful men for centuries would it furnish a reply!" *

What new and startling revelations are now possible by a simple enlargement of the powers of our senses! May the resurrection body not only have our present senses increased in their range and acuteness a million-fold, but new senses now unknown to us added?

The Scriptures assure us of three things in regard to the resurrection body. First, it will not be composed of flesh and blood like our present bodies, because "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." Second, it will be incorruptible, glorious, powerful, im-

* "The Resurrection of the Dead," by Rev. William Hanna, D.D., page 177.

mortal—a body adapted to the conditions of that world where God, in the visible splendors of His uncreated glories, dwells—and fitted for the enlarged capacities and new functions of the glorified spirit. Third, it will be like the glorified body of Christ, for at His coming He will "change our vile body"—or body of humiliation—"that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." When Christ was transfigured in the presence of His disciples, "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." This transfiguration adumbrates what the glory of the resurrection body shall be. When the apostle John in vision saw Him in His glorified body, His countenance beamed as brilliantly as the sun shining in his strength. His eyes glowed like a flame of fire, and His feet shone like burning brass. We shall be like Him. In trying to form a conception of the glory of the future body of the saints we may safely give free rein to fancy, because

the glorious reality cannot be surpassed. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man" the glory which God, in this particular, hath in reserve for His people. The saints who have accompanied Christ from heaven to earth, on the occasion of His second advent, will be clothed again with the same bodies which they once wore—the same in form, though changed in essential qualities, and dowered with exhaustless energy and surpassing, fadeless beauty. The bodies of believers then living will, in the twinkling of an eye, undergo such a change as shall render them immortal. On the Resurrection day, when the power of death has been forever annulled, and Christ's redeemed ones shall stand before Him, glorified spirits in glorified bodies, then shall they be able to say in rapturous triumph: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

IX.

THE RELATION OF THE SAINTS TO THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.

The second act in the closing drama of this world will be the Judgment. The resurrection of the wicked is to follow the resurrection of the saints. Imagine this earth hollow with sepulchres at the sound of "the trump of God," quivering from pole to pole as it yields up its dead. The sea will surrender all those who fell victims to its fury, and found a grave in its depths. From battle-fields once soaked with human blood, from the ruins of once populous cities, from thousands of rural and urban graveyards, from almost every spot of this heaving earth, on that great day will human bodies spring into existence.

One of the most impressive spectacles on

which mortal eye can gaze, is a vast throng of upturned human faces. It would be an imposing spectacle to see all the inhabitants of New York or Brooklyn gathered in one place earnestly deliberating on a question of vital importance to each one. No one could contemplate such a scene without feeling its impressiveness. How much more vast and impressive would be the spectacle if all the people of this nation—its fifty millions of inhabitants—met under similar circumstances. Imagine a spectacle still more overpowering, an assembly in which all the people now living on the earth have met, and yet this furnishes but a very inadequate idea of the vastness of that multitude that will stand at last before the judgment-seat of Christ. Could I by an exercise of Almightiness flatten out this earth into a great plain, and then could I take you to some elevated position in the air and endow you with such powers of vision that you could see everything that is occurring among its inhabitants, you would find that continuously, without pause or in-

terruption, day and night, winter and summer, springtime and harvest, in some part of the earth human bodies are being committed to the grave. And this same thing has been going on for centuries upon centuries. O what a long, wide procession, stretching back into the dim centuries, is that which is steadily with noiseless tread, at the rate of a hundred thousand souls a day, moving out of this world into the invisible world. The present estimated population of the earth is nearly fourteen hundred millions, and in less than half a century they will all be sleeping in the dust.

"All that tread the earth are but a handful
To the tribes that slumber in its bosom."

Each century that intervenes between the period in which we live and the judgment, will see thrice the present population of the globe sink into the tomb. Numbers fail to convey the faintest idea of the immenseness of that multitude which will gather before the judgment-seat of Christ at the last day.

To swell the number and add to the impressiveness of that scene the fallen angels will appear. This fact is stated by Peter: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto the judgment." Similar in purport are the words of Jude: "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." John caught a glimpse in his apocalyptic vision of what the judgment scene will be, and thus describes it: "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works."

Blending the various Scriptural descrip-

tions of the final judgment we have this picture. On that great day the Lord Jesus will, in His glorified human nature, sit enthroned in the clouds surrounded by all the holy angels. Before Him will be gathered the whole human race, all who have ever lived on this earth from Adam onward, and all the fallen angels. The saints, clothed in glorious bodies like Christ's own body, will be on His right hand, and His enemies, human and angelic, on His left hand. But the question is, what relation do the saints sustain to the final judgment? Are they there to be tried and judged?

There are many passages in the Scriptures which teach with great clearness that believers in Christ, those who have passed into the heavenly world, and those who are still on earth, have entered a condition of life in which they are not subject to the general judgment. Christ's own words on this point are, according to the rendering of the revised edition, "Verily, verily, I *say* unto you, He that heareth my word and believeth

Him that sent me, *hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment*, but hath passed out of death into life." That is, the believer has passed out of that state of sin and guilt that belongs to the judgment, and when the judgment comes he has therefore no part in it. Again, Christ says: "The hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice and come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment." The resurrection for the good is the rising body and soul into the full bliss of heaven; while they that have done ill, to that condition determined by the judgment. To Martha, Christ said: "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." In the case of the believer the only thing that dies in death is death itself. "The continuity of the life that is lived in Christ is never suspended, but is borne through the momentary darkness of death, into the sphere of a vivid and fruitful human experience where all is perfect forevermore." "There

is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." These declarations of Scripture teach with a clearness that cannot be gainsaid that eternal life begins in the soul of the believer here, that death is only an incident in his experience which does not interrupt the continuity of his life and is the means of introducing him into a state of sinless and perfect bliss.

But there is another class of passages which seem to imply that believers will be arraigned before the judgment-seat of Christ. "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment." "We must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad." But what is the judgment to him who dies in the Lord? Jesus, who pardoned all his sins the moment he believed, and who is his best friend, is his judge. He appears at the judgment-seat as one whose acquittal has already been pronounced, clad in the perfect righteousness of Jesus. The

judgment does not determine or change his condition. The Resurrection, for him, is not a resurrection unto judgment, but a resurrection unto greater fullness of life and bliss.

We return to the question, What relation do the saints sustain to the final judgment? Are such men as Abraham, Moses, David, Daniel, Stephen, and Paul—men who have been thousands of years in heaven—to be put on trial on the great judgment day? Is there not considerable confusion in the minds of many Christians in regard to the object of the final judgment? If those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ are pardoned the moment they believe, and their sins are cancelled and never rise against them to condemn them; if those who die in the Lord pass at once into heaven, and enter upon a career of sinless bliss—countless multitudes of whom will have been thousands of years in heaven when the judgment day comes, and, consequently, their eternal destiny will have been fixed thousands of years before the judgment—what is the

object of the final judgment? Its object is to vindicate God's administration of the affairs of this world, and exhibit to the intelligent universe His manifold wisdom and goodness as revealed in the plan of salvation. It takes place at the end of the world, because God's plan will then be complete, and the results can be exhibited. "Then those parts of the divine procedure which have been too deep and too high for the comprehension of the wisest and best men, and which have led wicked men to blaspheme the name of God, will shine forth to the admiring joy of saints and angels, and to the confusion of the ungodly. This is the view constantly set forth in the Scriptures. The apostle Paul teaches that the plan of salvation is developed 'to the intent that now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.' But there are many things in this wonderful plan which the angels to whom the apostle

refers are profoundly mysterious, and which they cannot comprehend, and 'the manifold wisdom' of which they cannot see till it shall be completed. 'Which things,' says Peter, 'the angels desire to look into.' Therefore the Psalmist, speaking of the general judgment, says: 'He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people: Gather my saints together unto me—those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness, for God is judge Himself.' He issues His summons to the inhabitants of heaven and earth to witness the solemn scene, that the heavens may declare His righteousness. Accordingly, we read that 'when the Son of Man shall come in His glory,' the holy angels shall come with Him to witness the final adjudication. Paul tells us that He 'shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,' and that 'He shall come to be glori-

fied in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.'" *

The judgment day is the day on which the saints shall stand before God, body and soul, sinless, glorified, and be openly acknowledged by the Lord Jesus Christ before the universe. The saints, instead of fearing the approach of the judgment day as a day whose decisions may unfavorably affect them, are taught in the Scriptures to look forward to it as their coronation day. Instead of being judged, they will actually bear a part in the general judgment as the assessors of Christ. "Know ye not that the saints will judge the world?" "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" The scenes of that great day will be closed by the Judge and King saying to His redeemed ones: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

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* "Immortality of the Soul and Destiny of the Wicked," by Rev. N. L. Rice, D.D., page 163.

X.

THE GRAND CONSUMMATION.

While the judgment is in progress in the air, the earth is to pass through a metamorphosis of fire which is to purge it of sin. The Psalmist says: "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them and they shall be changed." "Lift up your eyes to the heavens," says Isaiah, "and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment." Again, "Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind." "Heaven and earth," said Christ, "shall pass away."

Peter says, "The heavens and earth which are now are kept in store reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" "I saw," says John, "a great white throne and Him that sat on it, from whose face the heavens fled away, and there was found no place for them. I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea."

It would be vain to speculate as to the specific nature of the unexplained changes

the earth and its atmospheric heavens—all that part of material creation affected by sin —are to undergo at the final judgment. But with our present knowledge of the constituent elements of earth, air, and water, it is easy to see how a change in the relation which these properties sustain to each other would wrap this terraqueous globe in a flame of fire that would cause it to melt with fervent heat. "The fire-element in nature is oxygen; this gas is the producer of flame and combustion, and is the mightiest and most destructive of all the elements. Between one-half and two-thirds of the crust of this globe and of the bodies of its inhabitants consist of oxygen. One-fifth of the volume of the whole atmosphere is composed of oxygen. No less than eight-ninths of all water is formed of the same gas. It makes up three-fourths of our own bodies, and no less than four-fifths of every plant, and at least one-half of the solid rock. Let then this element but be released, let the mysterious affinities that now hold it in restraint but

cease, and the hardened rocks, or even the very waters of the ocean, would supply the fire and fervent heat that would consume the earth and the works that are therein." *

"It is more than probable that when the last catastrophe of our globe arrives, the oxygen and the nitrogen, or the two constituent principles of the atmosphere, will be separated by the interposition of Almighty Power. And the moment this separation takes place, the most dreadful explosions will resound throughout the whole expanse which surrounds the globe, which will stun the assembled world and shake the earth to its foundations. For if, in chemical experiments, conducted on a small scale, the separation of two gases, or their coming in contact with the principle of flame, is frequently accompanied with a loud and destructive explosion, it is impossible to form an adequate idea of the loud and tremendous explosions which would ensue were the whole atmosphere at

* "Religion and Chemistry," by Prof. J. P. Cooke.

once dissolved and its elementary principles separated from each other and left to exert their native energies. A sound as if creation had burst asunder, and accompanied the next moment with a universal blaze extending over sea and land, would present a scene of sublimity and terror which would more than realize all the descriptions given in Scripture of this solemn scene." *

Out of the fires in which this globe will be wrapped, a new heaven and a new earth will emerge, garnished with fairer scenes and more lovely landscapes than mortal eyes have ever gazed upon—an earth free from the taint or shadow of evil, wherein righteousness will dwell. There are expressions of Scripture which would seem to warrant the opinion held by some that this reconstructed and beautified earth will be one of the many mansions in God's house which the glorified may visit, or in which they may dwell.

After the resurrection has taken place, and

* "Philosophy of a Future State," by Dr. Thomas Dick.

the judgment is over, and the new heavens and the new earth have appeared—after sin has been extirpated, and death destroyed, and Christ shall have gathered all His people into heaven—one thing more remains to be done. Then the Lord Jesus Christ will resign His mediatorial sceptre. "Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." The end for which the mediatorial kingdom was established—namely, the extirpation of sin and the subjugation of every power hostile to God—having been accomplished, Christ's mediatorial reign will cease, and God shall dwell and reign visibly in the midst of His people. As we sweep out on the wings of a reverent imagination beyond the judgment, and contemplate re-

deemed man, a glorified spirit in a glorified body—clothed with the pomp and power of immortality, and fitted to work out unwearied-ly the grand ministries of eternity—the Scriptures teach two things in regard to his eternal future:

1. He shall be forever with the Lord. Eternal residence and fellowship with Jesus! Rapturous thought! This implies absolute and everlasting exemption from sin, temptation, sorrow and death, and perfect holiness and ineffable bliss.

"The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amid the war of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds."

The full greatness of the joy and glory of heaven cannot be set forth in the dialect of earth.

2. His knowledge of God, and of His works and ways, will continue to increase through all eternity. "The future is to be a grand progress through the linked sequences of an ascending scale; a golden ladder which we

shall climb, round after round, till we stand amid the awful and transfiguring splendors of the eternal throne; a constant advance towards the central Light; a constant increase in life, power, wisdom, charity; a beatific vision, which grows and spreads as we gaze upon it, and pours enlarging volume of energy and peace into our souls." * Is not this endless life of glory, increasing knowledge and power, beyond the stars, which it is possible to obtain through faith in Christ, worth all the self-denial and trials which it may now involve? "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Reader, "give diligence to make your calling and election sure. Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. So an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

* "The Resurrection," by Samuel Cox.

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